DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 527 PS 023 934

AUTHOR Sheridan, Sonja
TITLE Application of Quality Ratings in Pre-Schools in Community Developmental Work: The Lerum Competence Development Project.
PUB DATE Sep 95
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the European Conference on the Quality of Early Childhood Education (5th, Paris, France, September 7-9, 1995).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Care Occupations; Day Care; Day Care Centers; Educational Change; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Foreign Countries; *Inservice Education; *Preschool Education; Professional Development; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Staff Development; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale; Sweden

ABSTRACT

The Lerum Competence Development Project seeks to develop a model for educator inservice training to improve the quality of day care. Lerum is a small community outside Goteborg, Sweden, with approximately 35,000 inhabitants. The expansion of childcare provision within the community necessitates support of the teachers because of economic and organizational changes, hence, the start of the Lerum project in 1994. The training model is based on facilitating day care provider awareness of a range of issues and topics. This preliminary report describes main phases of the project, selection criteria for the experimental and reference groups, and use of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) as a basis for inservice training. It also discusses aspects of the training selection process and methods. Methods employed include: external lecture, literature studies, learning organizations, and self-evaluation. Preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of these measures is discussed. (JW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Paper presented at the 5th European Conference on the Quality of Early Childhood Education, La Sorbonne, Paris 7-9 September 1995.

Application of Quality ratings in pre-schools in community developmental work:

The Lerum competence development project.

Sonja Sheridan
Department of Education and Educational Research,
University of Goteborg.

ED 392 527

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Introduction.
The aim of the project is to try out a **"model for In-Service Training"** to maintain or hopefully to enhance quality within daycare.

Background.
Lerum is a small community outside Göteborg with approximately 35 000 inhabitants.
The Department of Child and Adolescent is working hard to meet the demands of the new regulations for child care provision and they have now made the decision that: Every child, in the child care provision que, will be offered a place within daycare before the end of the year.

This necessary expansion of childcare provision will probably lead to larger childgroups, a lower staff - child ratio and an extension of management duties for the senior staff. In order to support the teachers in these economic and organizational changes the Lerum project was started in 1994.

The project was developed out of two different issues:
The first one is;
How can we increase the teachers conditions to meet the consequences of these economic and organizational changes?

The second is;
The in-service training that normaly are being offered to teachers inside child day-care, does it lead to any change? Do we need another kind of in-service training to achieve competence development? One that is long- termed and tailored after the teachers actual needs.

"Quality evaluation and Quality enhancement of Current Day-care provision"
Development work in times of change with larger childgroups and lower staff-child ratios.

The project is run in collaboration with the Department of Education and Educational Research and the Department of Methodology in teacher Education at Göteborg University.
It has been funded by the Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare of the Lerum district council and the Department of Social Health Welfare.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sonja Sheridan
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PS 023934

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Lerum project.
The project comprises three stages,
step 1 - A rating of quality was done on 20 preschool groups, in the autumn of 1994.
step 2 - A selection of 10 of the original 20 preschool groups was made from the ratings based on the main Quality dimension. (Factor 1. Kärrby & Giota)
The teachers will receive directed In-service training for their actual needs,
which are based on the result measured by the ECERS.
Step 3 - the project will be finished by a new rating of quality on the original 20 preschool groups.

During the development work the ECERS will be used as:
An instrument for measuring quality to evaluate desired effects,
To map out the quality on ongoing activities in order to identify the staffs actual needs for In-service training
For the teachers as an instrument for self-evaluation.

The model for In-service Training.
The In-service training is build on the assumption that,
Reflection leads to greater awareness concerning what takes place within activities.
This kind of awareness is expected to develop through In-service training,
and is necessary for ongoing development work.

The planning of In-service training has to take into account three considerations, namely,
What are the desired effects?
What are present activities like?
Which competence enhancing inputs will have the greatest paybacks in terms of producing desired effects?

Selection criteria for the experimental and reference groups.
In step 2, A selection was to be made of experimental and reference groups.
I wanted to avoid a selection on basis of differences in outer structure and focus on differences in the interaction between child and teacher. I decided to use the main Q dimension as the basis for this selection. The reason for this is that the main Q dimension primarily mirrors the relation between child and teacher, and according to research this is the most important criterion for pedagogic quality of care provision.

The main Q dimension also reflects and identifies the needs for In-service training as the teachers in Lerum were generally shown to have low scores on these Item.

ECERS as a basis for the development of In-service training.
According to the criteria of quality we have elected to use, an optimal environment for child development and learning, is caracterised by a high level of pedagogical awareness.
Such an awareness can't be achieved only by reading books and taking part in lectures. It is by being active, reflecting and working on your own working methods, this can be done, as well as you improve your pedagogical knowledge by reading books a.s.o.

In order to obtain desired changes, the In-service training will focus around the interaction between child and teacher their each section will develop it's own content.

3 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The In-service training will be given in three different ways during a period of time.

Table 1.

ECERS as a basis for In-Service Training.

External lectures and litterature studies.
The experimental group will attend a series of lectures which focus on the interaction between the child and the teacher and the content is built on "needs" identified by the ECERS and the main Q dimension. Between each lecture, the teachers are doing litterature studies.

A learning organisation.
At the same time they function as a Learning Organisation,
sharing competence and knowledge. In the experimental group is both teams with high and low results on the ECERS and they have different competences. To make it possible for them to learn from each other, the experimental group will, during these lectures, get time for discussions among themselves to exchange their different experiences and understandings.

It is especially the variations in ways of thinking and doing which will be lifted up, both within the smaller working team and among the members of the experimental group.

Supervision.
The working teams will receive supervision ones a month where they can ask questions, their own development work will be followed up, as well as their ideas about how to proceed. During supervision a speech therapist or a lecturer from the University can participate and give advice in the area they have choosen to develop.

Self-evaluation.
The development work started with a self-evaluation on the basis of the ECERS.
Under supervision, their independent judgement was compared by the members of their working team. It was common that they had experienced the same situation in very different ways. This lead to interesting discussions among the teachers.

Their knowledge will be increased by their learning from eachother, and when their subjective ways of thinking are being set in relation to both the general quality criteria of the ECERS and other research.

The result of theirs as well as the result of my evaluations, was the point of departure for the planning of the in-service training.

The main Q Dimension

Each working team has studied and discussed the Items in the main Q dimension in order to reach an understanding what their In-service training will focus around and to give them inspiration about areas to be developed in their sections.

Diary.

The participants will keep a diary in which they can analys different situations.
They do this with help from an analysis model which makes them reflect over their actions and feelings. This is of great importance for development of teaching competence.
The diary also makes it possible for them to follow their personal progress.

Work-exchange.

By work exchange they might be able to enhance their competence development.
A scheme was arranged so two teachers change places and as far as possible they carried out each others duties under a full working day.

Video-recording.

As part of the In-service training the working teams are supposed to video-record themselves in different interaction situations. They are only suppossed to record situations which lift up their strong points so they can develop awarenesses and confirmations about professional attitudes, and at the same time it will show how dependable their knowledge is of the context.

The whole working team and the superviser look at the video-films together. In each video sequence we systematicly search for Professor Pnina Kleins five basic criteria, in the relation between child and teacher, for "Mediated learning".

The five criteria are:
1. Intentionality - reciprocity, 2. Mediation of meaning, 3. Mediation of transcendence / expansion or going beyond, 4. Mediation of feelings of competence, 5. Mediation of regulation of behaviour.

Visit high quality departments.

When each section begin their development work, it will be possible for them to visit other sections which have a high Q of work in the field they want to develop.

The development work will be finished with a new self-evaluation.

Experiences from the project.

Self-evaluation.
The teachers experienced difficulties in making self-evaluation using the ECERS. They were not used to formulate their thoughts, actions and experiences in either words or writing them down.

Result of self-evaluation.
Persons who seemed to work from an adult perspective also had a tendancy to rate themselves higher than my judgement. I also seen that thoose with a high pedagogical awareness seem to have a tendency to underestimate themelves. Both within a great variation.

Teachers involvement.
At the start of the development work some of the participants were concerned about the demands to be placed on them, the actual input of work which was ecpected of them, and the time they had to spare for it. As the work progressed they became more and more positive and many are very involved.

Confirmation of the teachers strenghs.
Particularly rewarding they found the illumination of their strenghs and this confirmation helped them to work with the callenge of improving their weaknesses as well.

Awareness.
In informal conversation with participants and their managers it has been confirmed that conversation between the teachers have become much more penetrative and have also developed added dimensions, and I interpret it as their awareness has expanded.

Management.
During the development work it has become obvious that it is neccesary to involve the management for the day care centers. They need to increase their own knowledge about: pedagogical quality, the ECERS, how to support their personnel, how to create possibilities for them to join the development work a.s.o.
From autumn 1995 they will, parallell with their staff, receive targetted In-service training, for their actual needs. Their needs are depending on the kind of support their staff is in favor of.

The senior staff will use ECERS to identify the needs of their teachers, work in a dialog with them, formulate the ideas in a programme to be tried out during 1996. For their own support the senior staff will do litterature studies, receive external lectures and supervision.
They will function as a learning organisation, sharing their knowledge and experiences with their colleagues in management.

Uses within the council district.
The model for further education can be used by the council, and because of the project, the in-service training can be more distinctively targettet towards identified needs.
The model can become a link in long term competence development in which the local council´s own resources can be utilized and as far as posssible within it´s ordinary framework.

Lerum have obtained a clearer picture of the levels of quality within the districts child care provision through the first meassurements. This picture can be used by local politiciants and managers as a basis for future decisions.

Day care centres obtain an image of their strengths and weaknesses and they can make provision for improving their weaknesses.
At a time when parents are beginning to select day care for there children it is important that these centres make themselves attractive and develop a good reputation.

Staff obtain enhanced awareness and deeper insights into their work. Through using ECERS for evaluation and self-assessment their confidence may be enhanced (improved) They will be able to express what they do, how they do it and why in words.

As far as parents and children are concerned this should lead to a better contact and a qualitatively improved environmental standard.

References:

Barn och Ungdomsnämnden, bokslut (1994). Lerums kommun. "Verksamhetsberättelse".

Carlgren, I. (1994). Kvalitet i pedagogiskt arbete med barn. Socialstyrelsen. Allmänna Förlaget, 1992.

Klein, P., Wieder, S. & Greenspan, S. I. (1986). Predication from mother-child interaction patterns to pre-school performance based on observation of mediated learning experiences. Child Development.

Karrby, G. & Giota, J. (1994:1). Dimensions of Quality in Swedish Day Care Centers-An analysis of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. Early Child Development and care, vol. 104, pp. 1-22. 1994 OPA (Overseas Publishers Association).

Marton, F. (1981). Phenomenography - Describing conceptions of the world around us, Instructional Science 10: 177-200.

Pramling, I. (1994). Kunnandets Grunder. Acta Universitatis gothoburgensis.

Ramsden, P. (1992). Learning to teach in higher education. Routledge 29 West 35th Street New York, NY 10001.

Sheridan, S. (1994). En kvalitetsmätning och kvalitetsförhöjning av befintlig barnomsorg - Ett utvecklingsarbete i förändringstider med större barngrupper och lägre personaltäthet. Delrapport, 940801-941231. Barn och Ungdomsförvaltningen, Lerums kommun.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2. Bilaga 1.

ECERS as a basis for In-Service Training

External lectures & Litterature studies 9501-9511

Introduction of Q & ECERS	Roll of Pedgogue	To Learn to learn	Young Children	Play	Language	Summarize

Exp. Group

A learning Organisation 9504-9511 Sharing of Knowledge

Self evalua-tion	Main Dimension	Diary	Analysis Model	Work Exchange	Video Recording	Visit High Q sections	Self evalua-tion

Supervision 9501-9602

Control Group

9408-9507
Regular In-Service Training

9508-9512
External Lectures partly planned from needs meassured by the ECERS.

Manage-ment

9509-9606
Directed In-Service Training connected with the Experimental Group